

## Senate Bill No. 1498

### CHAPTER 1033

An act to amend Section 22511.55 of, and to add Section 22511.58 to, the Vehicle Code, relating to vehicles.

[Approved by Governor September 27, 1996. Filed  
with Secretary of State September 29, 1996.]

#### LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 1498, Kopp. Vehicles: disabled person: parking privileges.

Under existing law, the Department of Motor Vehicles may require a person applying for a disability placard for parking purposes to submit a certificate from specified medical professionals substantiating the person's disability.

This bill would require, rather than authorize, the department to require the applicant to submit such a certificate, prior to the issuance of an original distinguishing placard, and would require the certifying medical professionals to provide a full description of the illness or disability, except as specified. The bill would require the department to maintain this information in its records and make it available to eligible law enforcement or public parking control agencies, upon request. The bill would prohibit the department from providing that information to any private or other 3rd-party parking citation processing agency.

The bill would authorize local authorities to establish a review board or panel that includes a qualified physician or medical authority, to review information contained in applications for special parking privileges.

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

SECTION 1. Section 22511.55 of the Vehicle Code is amended to read:

22511.55. (a) (1) Any disabled person or disabled veteran may apply to the department for the issuance of a distinguishing placard. The placard may be used in lieu of the special identification license plate or plates issued under Section 5007 for parking purposes described in Section 22511.5 when suspended from the rear view mirror or, if there is no rear view mirror, when displayed on the dashboard of a vehicle. It is the intent of the Legislature to encourage the use of these distinguishing placards because they provide law enforcement officers with a more readily recognizable symbol for distinguishing vehicles qualified for the parking privilege. The placard shall be the size and color determined by the department,

shall bear the International Symbol of Access adopted pursuant to Section 3 of Public Law 100-641, commonly known as the “wheelchair symbol.” The department shall incorporate instructions for the lawful use of a placard, and a summary of the penalties for the unlawful use of a placard, into the identification card issued to the placard owner.

(2) (A) The department may establish procedures for the issuance and renewal of the placards. The placards shall have a fixed expiration date of June 30 every two years. Whenever any application for a placard is submitted to the department on or after January 1 of the year of expiration, the fee shall be for the current and subsequent renewal period.

(B) As used in this section, “year” means the period between the inclusive dates of July 1 through June 30.

(C) Prior to the end of each year, the department shall, for the most current three years available, compare its record of disability placards issued against the records of the Bureau of Vital Statistics of the State Department of Health Services, or its successor, and withhold any renewal notices that otherwise would have been sent, for any placard holders identified as deceased.

(3) The fee for an original application or renewal application is six dollars (\$6).

(4) Except as provided in paragraph (5), no person is eligible for more than one placard at any time.

(5) Organizations and agencies involved in the transportation of disabled persons or disabled veterans may apply for a placard for each vehicle used for the purpose of transporting disabled persons or disabled veterans.

(b) Prior to issuing any disabled person or disabled veteran an original distinguishing placard, the department shall require the applicant to submit a certificate signed by the physician or surgeon substantiating the disability, unless the applicant’s disability is readily observable and uncontested. The disability of any person who has lost, or has lost use of, one or more lower extremities or both hands, or who has significant limitation in the use of lower extremities, may also be certified by a licensed chiropractor. The blindness of any applicant shall be certified by a licensed physician or surgeon who specializes in diseases of the eye or a licensed optometrist. The physician or person certifying the qualifying disability shall provide a full description of the illness or disability on the form submitted to the department.

The department shall maintain in its records all information on an applicant’s certification of permanent disability and shall make such information available to eligible law enforcement or parking control agencies upon a request pursuant to Section 22511.58.

(c) (1) Any person who has been issued a distinguishing placard pursuant to subdivision (a) may apply to the department for a

substitute placard without recertification of eligibility, if that placard has been lost or stolen.

(2) The fee for a substitute placard issued pursuant to paragraph (1) is six dollars (\$6).

(d) The distinguishing placard shall be returned to the department not later than 60 days after the death of the disabled person or disabled veteran to whom the placard was issued.

SEC. 2. Section 22511.58 is added to the Vehicle Code, to read:

22511.58. (a) Upon a request to the department by a local public law enforcement agency or local agency responsible for the administration or enforcement of parking regulations, the department shall make available to the requesting agency any information contained in a physician's certificate submitted to the department as part of the application for a disabled person's parking privileges, substantiating the disability of a person applying for or who has been issued a parking placard pursuant to Section 22511.55. The department shall not provide the information specified in this subdivision to any private or other third-party parking citation processing agency.

(b) Local authorities may establish a review board or panel, which shall include a qualified physician or medical authority, for purposes of reviewing information contained in the applications for special parking privileges and the certification of qualifying disabilities for persons residing within the jurisdiction of the local authority. Any findings or determinations by a review board or panel under this section indicating that an application or certification is fraudulent or lacks proper certification may be transmitted to the department or other appropriate authorities for further review and investigation.

